

IT TAKES A TEAM

This Italian-style dream kitchen demanded collaboration every step of the way

Cabinets topped with crown molding now reach the 9-foot ceiling



Details in the Diedrich's new kitchen include carved corbels, heavily-veined granite, a limestone hood, and a hammered-copper sink.



by **Carmen Peota**
photos by **Susan Gilmore**

THE WHITE CABINETS WERE CHIPPED, the floor scratched, the double ovens too small for roasting pans, and the island stovetop in the way when the homeowners were entertaining. For years, LeeAnn Diedrich knew she wanted to remodel the kitchen in her Woodbury home. “It was just tired,” she says. She could even picture its Italian-inspired replacement. But she didn’t know how to make it happen.

She called several remodelers, who told her they’d start designing after she put down a deposit. But to Diedrich and her husband Jim, it didn’t make sense to hire the builder before they had the design. “Our idea was the opposite,” she says. “We wanted a plan in place first.”

It wasn’t until they met interior designer Lynn Woodruff-Peterson through a mutual friend that they saw a way forward. Woodruff-Peterson, principal of Lynn Peterson Design, considers it part of the interior designer’s role to build the team needed for such a project. She immediately brought in architect Andy Campbell, of Andy Campbell Design Co. in Minneapolis, to help her. The design challenge: how to bring an old-world feel into a suburban house built in 1994.

Seeing no need to move walls, they decided to transform the space with color, lighting, and craftsmanship. They began by drawing. They’d add beams to create drama and “humanize the space,” and upper cabinets that reached to the 9-foot ceiling and are topped with an elegant crown molding. “You can tell the age of a house by how the upper cabinets engage with the ceiling,” Woodruff-Peterson notes. They’d create curved archways for the openings between the kitchen and the living and sun rooms. They’d move the stove to an exterior wall and find space for a much larger refrigerator.

Per the owners’ request, they bid out the plan to three contractors. Nathan Mielke, of Nathan Mielke Home Services in Hopkins, landed the job and brought in cabinetmaker Bob Heinzen, of Lakeside Custom Cabinets. “Team Diedrich” was growing. “Now you’ve got four of us,” Woodruff-Peterson says, “really taking that ego and getting rid of it.”

The ellipsis-shaped archways, in particular, demanded collaboration. Mielke wasn’t sure how to do the framing, the designers weren’t confident about the curve, and the clients wondered if the opening would feel too small. In the end, the team built a mock-up for all to approve. Meanwhile, Woodruff-Peterson and Heinzen worked together to design a stand-alone cabinet that had the look of an antique armoire and would function as a drop station as well as provide extra storage.

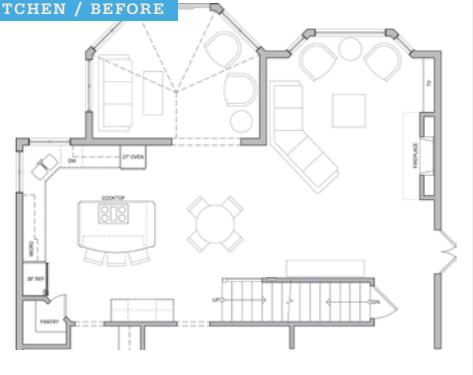
TEAM

ARCHITECT: Andy Campbell Design Co.
BUILDER: Nathan Mielke Home Services
INTERIOR DESIGNER: Lynn Peterson Design

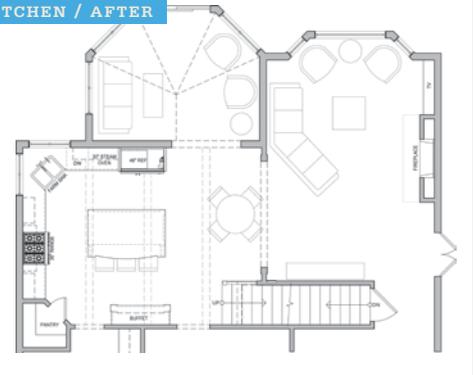


Stand-alone cabinet, designed and built for the homeowners' needs

KITCHEN / BEFORE



KITCHEN / AFTER



Once construction began, Mielke was at the site, working alongside his carpenter and other subs and thinking through next steps. “There’s a value to seeing things day in and day out that you don’t get if you show up an hour or two at a time,” he says. Diedrich agrees. “Everything was covered. I felt secure in that nothing will be missed here with this team.”

In the new kitchen, colors, textures, and shapes blend, creating a room with visual harmony. Intricately carved corbels dress up

the rustic alder island, while hand-carved diamond and arrow shapes adorn the door panels on the earthy green armoire. The countertops are a heavily veined honed granite, the vent hood is limestone, and the farmhouse sink is hammered copper. Large bronze chandeliers light up the island and table, and a contrasting mercury glass fixture hangs above the sink. The archways frame it all.

That it all came together—on time and without surprises—is no accident. Wood-

ruff-Peterson says the key was finding people who can communicate and collaborate. When you see a photograph of a great space, know that “it takes a lot of people to make that as cool as it is,” she says. “It takes a team to make it happen.”

CARMEN PEOTA is a Minneapolis writer and editor.

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